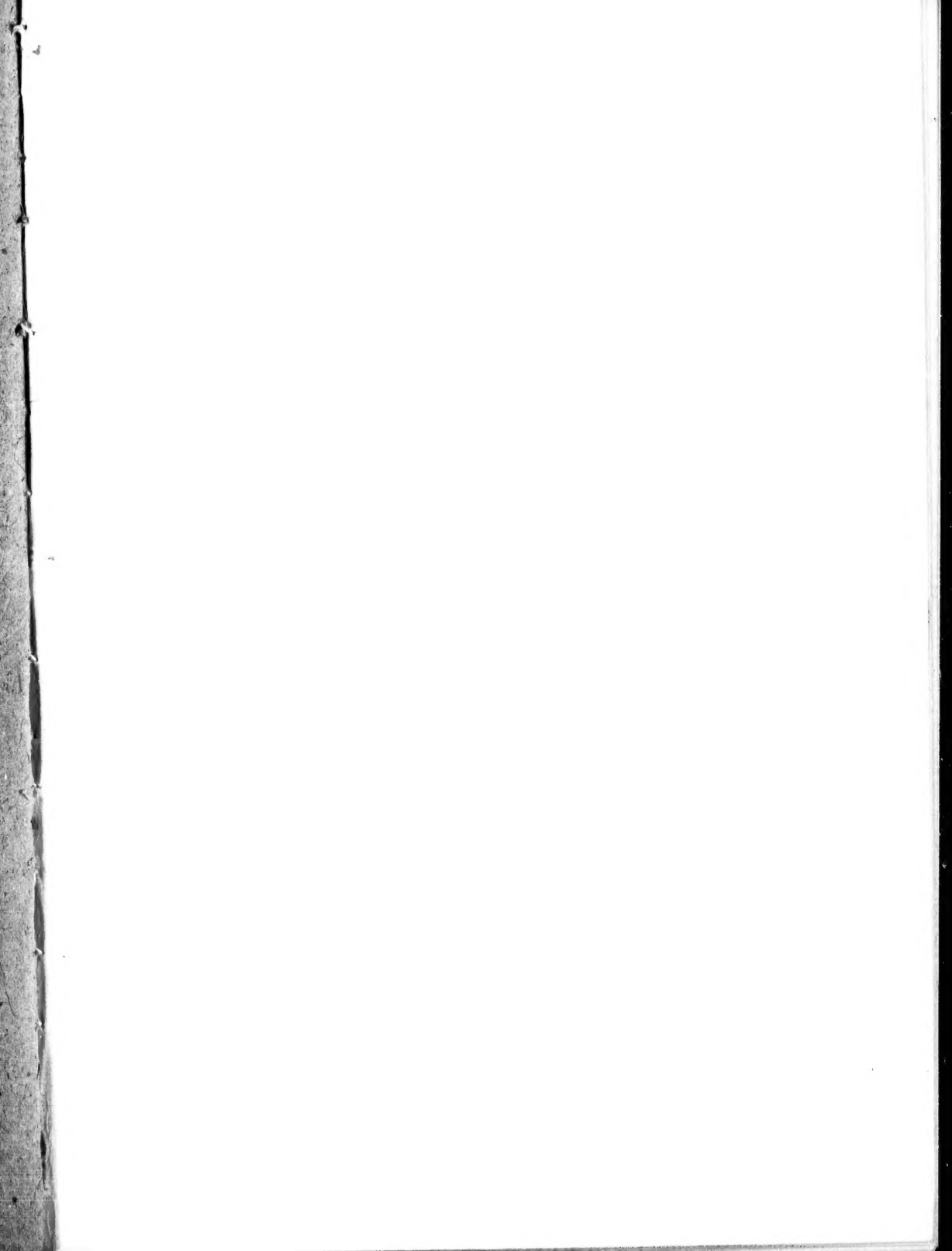




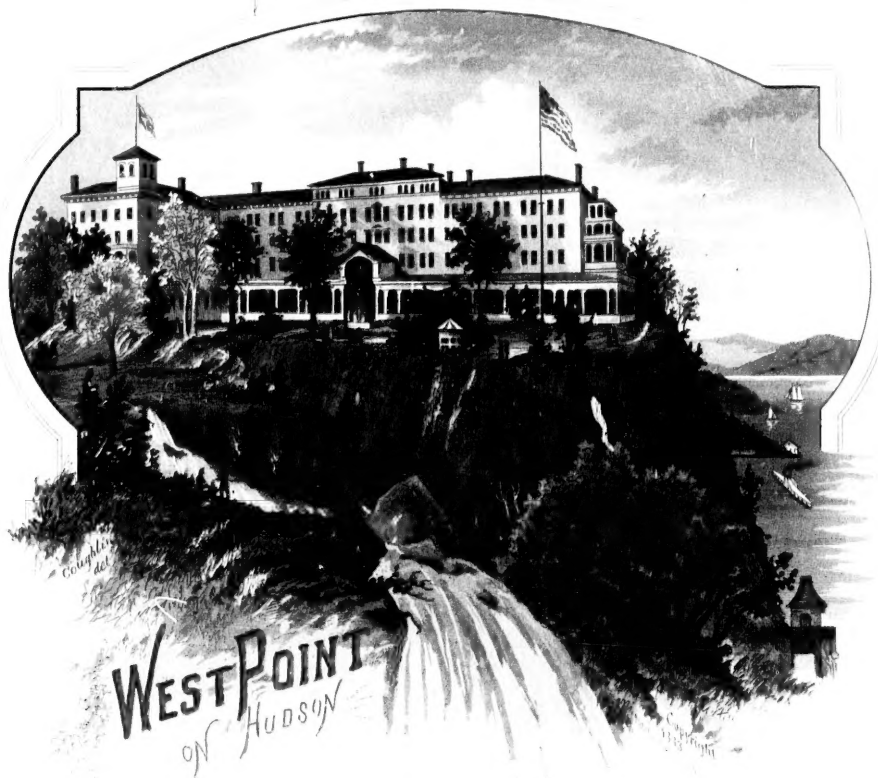
THE
HUDSON
HIGHLANDS.



1780 — 1880



CRANSTON'S.



— In the Highlands. —

1871

1872

1873



THE



UDSON



IGHLANDS

"The spot where Kosciusko dreamed,
Fort Putnam's gray and ruined wall,
West Point, where patriot bayonets gleamed,—
This page reveals them all."

WALLACE BRUCE—"Poems on the Hudson."

AT NEW YORK
IMPRINTED FOR
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1883

1883
(27)



THE
HUDSON HIGHLANDS.



THE Highlands of the Hudson were the backbone of the Revolution. It was here, in the early part of the war, that General Washington first saw the importance of fortifying and holding the strong positions which nature had already formed, and which needed only a little work of man to make almost impregnable.

A few of these points, fortified, enabled the American army to keep all the fleets of King George below the Highlands, as well as a free and uninterrupted communication

between the New England States and the Middle and Southern States. So long, as this system remained intact, the integrity of the thirteen colonies was unbroken.

This was well understood by Sir Henry Clinton, and after finding that this stronghold was too well guarded by General Washington to be captured by assault, he gave up the chivalrous course of the soldier, taking upon himself the work of the detective, seeking, through the venality of a Benedict Arnold, to gain possession of this key to the Revolution.

The important part that the Highlands played in the struggle for American Independence makes them forever dear to all lovers of freedom; and though a hundred years have elapsed since those stirring times, yet there is no one who is not fond of visiting their historic scenes, and looking upon the very spots where the drama of the birth of a nation was played in earnest; where the patriot built his fortresses and died in defending them; where the traitor almost suc-

ceeded in making treachery triumphant; where a small and ragged army guarded well this backbone of the system of States, furnishing every member thereof vitality and life.

Few there are who can look upon these scenes with heart untouched, and no American can see them without feeling the warm sympathetic glow of his heart kindle with respect and veneration toward his forefathers, who toiled, suffered, and died in order that their children might have a government under which all men would be free and equal.

It is true that peace and plenty have succeeded the bustle and confusion of war, yet the same mountain-peaks tower on high in their silent grandeur, and the rugged scenery remains the same to-day as it did a century ago.

It was amid these scenes that Forts Clinton and Montgomery were erected, at the lower end of the Highlands, and just across the river, from the latter fort, towered

“Anthony’s Nose.” Between these two points was stretched an iron cable, or chevaux-de-frise, to prevent the passage of British ships.

These two forts were commanded by Generals George and James Clinton, two brothers renowned for their loyalty and devotion to the cause of Liberty.

Early in the month of October, 1777, Sir Henry Clinton, commander-in-chief of the British army, made an expedition in person against these two forts.

Landing his forces, consisting of two thousand men, at Stony Point, he marched around the base of Dunderberg, and when between that and Bear Hill he separated his command in order to attack the two forts simultaneously. One detachment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, marched around the west side of Bear Hill to assault Fort Montgomery; the other, in command of himself, was to assault, at the same time, Fort Clinton.

These two attacks were made as contem-

plated, and, after a terrible conflict, both forts were captured. "On the following morning, the chevaux-de-frise and other obstructions between Fort Montgomery and Anthony's Nose were cleared away; the Americans evacuated Forts Independence and Constitution, and a free passage of the Hudson was open for British ships."¹

Fort Independence was below Fort Clinton, in the vicinity of Peekskill, and Fort Constitution was on the island opposite West Point. These comprised all the fortifications at this time of the Highlands. Fort Putnam was not yet completed.

General Putnam, in command of the Highlands, retreated up the river from Peekskill, his headquarters, to Fishkill.

This was the only time that the British had free passage of the Hudson up to Albany, during the war. At this time Sir Henry Clinton built largely upon it, as it gave him free communication with General

¹ Irving's *Life of Washington*, vol. iii., p. 248.

Burgoyne, so soon as the latter should destroy the army under General Gates, then opposing his march from Canada to Albany, by way of Lakes Champlain and George.

After the capture of the forts, Governor Clinton, who had escaped from Fort Montgomery by leaping down the rocks into the river, immediately rallied what few soldiers he could find, calling upon the militia of the State, so that in a few days he had a little force at New Windsor, just below Newburg, on the river.

Mr. Irving in his *Life of Washington* says: "On the 9th (October) two persons coming from Fort Montgomery were arrested by his guard, and brought before him for examination. One was much agitated, and was observed to put something hastily into his mouth and swallow it. An emetic was administered, and brought up a small silver bullet. Before he could be prevented he swallowed it again. On his refusing a second emetic, the Governor threatened to have him hanged and his body opened. This

threat produced the bullet in the preceding manner. It was oval in form, and hollow, with a screw in the centre, and contained a note from Sir Henry Clinton to Burgoyne, written on a slip of thin paper, and dated October 8th, from Fort Montgomery, '*Nous y voici*' (here we are), and nothing between us and Gates. I sincerely hope this little success of ours will facilitate your operations.' The bearer of the letter was tried and convicted as a spy and sentenced to be hanged."¹

The British had sailed up to Kingston, the then capital of New York, captured it, and burned it, together with a large amount of military stores collected at that point, then retreated to their ships.

Governor Clinton hung the spy in full sight of the burning town.

The British gained no further advantage from the possession of the Highlands, as on the 17th of the same month Burgoyne was compelled to surrender all his forces to the

¹ Vol. iii., p. 250.

American army under the command of General Gates. The British ships and troops retired below the Highlands, and never again succeeded in capturing them.

Prose and poetry have vied with each other in picturing the beauties of the Highlands. Though volumes have been written delineating their magnificent scenery, or showing the exquisite beauty, like a pretty picture, of some secluded nook, within the sound of rippling water, where light and shadow seem to play, chasing each other across the valley and away o'er the mountain top until they are lost in the blue ether of the summer sky, yet not one tithe of their grandeur or beauty has been told.

Could those lofty mountains but speak, how terrible would be their tales of the bloody conflicts, the agony and suffering which have taken place in their immediate presence.

Such tales would show the manly courage of the warrior who took part in the Revolution. There are none but would listen with

rapt attention to such narrations, for no matter how adverse one may be to war and its shedding of blood, the heart will involuntarily swell with admiration at the recital of deeds of valor on the field of battle.

But they could tell another story, of dark, deep-laid treachery, carried on for months at their very feet, by which one of America's bravest generals fell from the high pedestal of a gallant soldier to the eternal infamy of a traitor.

During the year 1780, Benedict Arnold, who held a commission of general in the American army, was assigned to the important command of West Point, which embraced the Highlands. For months before this he had opened up a secret correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton over the signature of "Gustavus." The correspondence was kept up on the part of Sir Henry by his aide-de-camp, Major John André, over the signature of "John Anderson."

Arnold occupied and used for his headquarters the house owned, and before the

war occupied, by Beverley Robinson, who was a royalist, and at the breaking out of the war had left his country-seat, known as "Beverley," and taken a commission in the British army with the rank of colonel. The whole estate of "Beverley" had been confiscated by the State of New York before it was occupied by Arnold.

As has been said, West Point seemed to be the key to the success of the Revolution, and now that Arnold was in command, it was well worth the while for Sir Henry to listen to the overtures of the former. So the correspondence became more active, until it was arranged that Arnold should surrender West Point and the Highlands, with all the troops and military stores in his command.

To make the arrangement sure, it was thought best that a personal interview should take place between Arnold and André.

To effect this, Arnold went down the river to the house of Joshua Hett Smith, in the vicinity of Stony Point, and induced Smith to go off in a small boat, at night, to the

British sloop-of-war Vulture, then lying at anchor in the Hudson, and bring Major André on shore. Smith accomplished this successfully, landing Major André at midnight at the place agreed upon, where they found Arnold waiting. The two withdrew into a thicket, and by the time the negotiation was completed, morning had dawned upon them. It was thought best for André to pass the day at Smith's house, and go off to the Vulture the following night.

Arnold returned to his headquarters that morning, leaving André at Smith's house.

As soon as it was dark André desired Smith to put him on board the Vulture. This he refused to do, alleging that the men who rowed had gone off, and that he could not do it alone. André then decided to go by land, making use of the pass that Arnold had given him for such an emergency. Smith accompanied him across the river at King's Ferry, and started him on his way to New York on horseback.

André got along very well, using his pass,

until he was well in what was called the "Neutral Ground," and, as he thought, beyond all the American outposts. As he came near the place now known as Tarrytown, he was stopped by three men, guarding the road. From their appearance he took them to be adherents of the British army, and without reserve declared his name and rank. They thereupon told him they were American soldiers, and made him prisoner.

They found nothing suspicious upon him until they pulled off his boots. There, carefully stowed away, they discovered the whole plan of betrayal in Arnold's handwriting. André then tried to gain his release by offering his captors large sums of money, together with his watch and chain. But they were not to be bribed. They took him to the nearest American post, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Jameson, and gave him in charge of that officer.

These three men, whose names were John Paulding, Isaac Van Wart, and David Wil-

liams, though poor and unknown, preferred manhood and integrity to British gold. How vastly different do their names appear on the page of history from that of Benedict Arnold!

Lieutenant-Colonel Jameson placed André under guard, and sent the papers found upon him to General Washington.

For some inexplicable reason he despatched a letter to Arnold, informing him of the capture of André, and that he had forwarded the papers to General Washington.

The latter was on his way to West Point, and had notified Arnold that he, together with Generals Knox, Lafayette, and aides would breakfast with him at the Robinson House.

Upon arriving in the vicinity, Generals Washington, Knox, and Lafayette desired to look at some fortifications, which would prevent their taking breakfast with Arnold as proposed. So he sent Colonel Hamilton, with the other aides, direct to Arnold's, with the message not to wait breakfast for him.

Mrs. Arnold, who had only a few days before this joined her husband, presided at the breakfast, with her husband, Colonel Hamilton, and several officers. While they were at the table, a letter was handed to Arnold—the one sent him by Lieutenant-Colonel Jameson :

“The mine had exploded beneath Arnold’s feet; yet in this awful moment he gave an evidence of that quickness of mind which had won laurels for him when in the path of duty. Controlling the dismay which must have smitten him to the heart, he beckoned Mrs. Arnold from the breakfast-table, signifying a wish to speak with her in private. When alone with her in her room up-stairs, he announced in hurried words that he was a ruined man, and must instantly fly for his life ! Overcome by the shock, she fell senseless on the floor. Without pausing to aid her, he hurried down-stairs, sent the messenger to her assistance, probably to keep him from an interview with the other officers ; returned to the breakfast-room, and informed

his guests that he must haste to West Point to prepare for the reception of the commander-in-chief; and mounting the horse of the messenger, which stood saddled at the door, galloped down by what is still called Arnold's Path, to the landing-place, where his six-oared barge was moored. Throwing himself into it, he ordered his men to pull out into the middle of the river, and then made down with all speed."¹

During the same morning the messenger that had been sent to carry the papers found on André to General Washington, arrived at Arnold's headquarters, having learned that General Washington was to be there. These papers revealed the whole plot, and at once solved the mysterious departure of Arnold.

Though General Washington took immediate measures to intercept Arnold, it was too late; the latter, without interruption, arrived at the Vulture; and in order to show the world that there was no limit to his

¹ Irving's Washington, vol. iv., p. 131.

meanness, he gave up his bargemen, who had rowed him down, as prisoners of war.

Much to the credit of Sir Henry Clinton, upon hearing of this circumstance, he released the bargemen, and sent them to the American lines.

Major André was brought, the night following the escape of Arnold, to the Robinson House, and was afterward tried and executed as a spy.

Mrs. Arnold was shown every attention and consideration by General Washington; and as soon as she was able she returned to her father's house in Philadelphia, where she hoped to be allowed to remain. Congress would not permit her to remain within the American lines. She thereupon joined her husband in New York, subsequently going with him to England, where she died.

Thus terminated the career of Arnold as an American soldier. He did everything on his part to give to Great Britain the fruit of his infamy, but it turned to ashes, ay, to wormwood and gall, in the loss of one of

her best loved officers, who was hanged as a spy.

Arnold left nothing undone to bring ruin and destruction upon his country, that country which had placed chaplets of laurel upon his brow ; which had showered honor and fame upon him ; which had reposed confidence and trust in him.

He descended into the depths of infamy to forge the bolt that was to rend and shatter his country ; but the protecting hand of Providence averted the blow, permitting it to spend its force in blasting the life of its designer forever.

As the fruits of that war, we have the Highlands, enjoying peace, and abounding in comfort and luxury, affording a grateful resort to those who seek in summer clear sunshine and pure mountain air.

Cranston's West Point Hotel, on the Hudson, situated about midway in the Highlands, affords, perhaps, as many attractions as can be found in any resort on the continent.

On a bold, rocky promontory, which rises

perpendicular from the water over two hundred feet, stands the hotel, overlooking the river for miles. On either side are spread out handsome country-seats, while in the rear tower the lofty mountains.

The views from every side are grand, and it is difficult to determine which one is the best. To one fond of mountain scenery these views are a continual feast, and days might gather into weeks before the eye would weary of their grandeur.

From the front piazzas may be seen a long stretch of the east side of the river, thickly dotted with summer residences, some grand and lofty, others simple and unpretentious, while all are embowered among the trees, and now and then the hard, smooth roadway will peep out as it winds its serpentine course through the grassy lawns.

There, just beyond the handsome residence of Hon. Hamilton Fish, may be seen the identical Robinson House, Benedict Arnold's headquarters. There, where that shoulder of land makes out into the river,

was the landing where he kept his barge. Lower down, and just at the bend of the river, looms up Anthony's Nose. Looking the other way, and up the river, may be seen the site of Fort Constitution, and back from the river, overlooking the military grounds of West Point, a glimpse is caught of Fort Putnam, with the stormy peak of "Crow's Nest" in the distance.

Some two years since, Mr. Cranston, the proprietor of the New York Hotel, came into possession of this property, known as "Cozzen's Hotel," and has spared neither money nor labor in beautifying the grounds, and making the hotel in every respect a luxurious and attractive home. In fact, there remains nothing of the "Cozzen's Hotel" but the bare walls of the building, which are of brick founded on the solid rock.

Its location permits a perfect system of drainage, which has been completely carried out by Mr. Cranston, so that malaria, with all its multiplication of ailments, is absolutely unknown.

The perfect cleanliness of the hotel, together with the cool, fresh air from the mountain tops, and pure water from their springs, will eradicate that hydra-headed disease from the system far more effectually than any course of medical treatment. Not a room, not even the smallest bedroom of the attic, but has been renovated and furnished completely with new furniture. The mattresses of hair, clean white linen, and soft spring water for bathing, are all that can be desired.

What more can be said of the table than that it fully equals that of the New York Hotel?

The grounds enclosed consisting of about twenty acres of fine lawn, are more or less covered with handsome trees, which in some parts make a complete shade during all the day, where children are allowed to play, roll, and tumble *ad libitum*.

Near the house the grounds were quite broken, but the hills have been graded and modified so much by art that they now form smooth grassy undulations to diversify the

view. Here and there a huge rock stands out in bold relief, showing that nature has not been entirely supplanted by art. To make the grounds still more attractive, the landscape gardener has provided a great number of beds of flowers and grasses, in a variety of forms, which, with the smoothly shaven lawns, form a pleasing contrast.

The very neat and pretty cottages dotting the grounds assume a quietude and picturesque among the rocks and flowers, more from the irregularity of their position than they otherwise would, if placed upon a line exactly alike.

The broad, smooth carriage-way and gravelled walks, winding in and out among the rocks and trees, form a distinctive feature of the general plan.

No prettier sight can be seen than the one from the broad veranda, looking down through the vista of trees over the flowery lawn, with the piazzas of the cottages filled with graceful loungers, while here the children are romping and playing under the

supposed watchful eye of the nurse; there, young ladies and gentlemen, with bat and ball, earnestly engaged in the active game of lawn tennis;—see with what graceful skill that lady pierces the target with the quivering arrow, and how with equal grace she retires, amid the applause of her admirers, one of whom, it may be, has already been singled out for a target to be pierced by Cupid's dart, directed by the same flashing eye; while continually going to and fro along the carriage-way are the dashing turnouts or the more sober equipages of the guests.

Such is the picture, teeming with active life and enjoyment, that may be looked upon any bright morning. If the weather is unpleasant the click of the balls in the bowling alley may be heard near at hand.

A view entirely different may be obtained from the other side of the hotel. There, from the little summer-house, located just on the edge of the precipice, is seen, immediately underneath, the majestic Hudson.

Upon the right are the waters, roaring and tumbling as they rush over the rocky structure of "Buttermilk Falls," down into the gorge on their way to the river. Forming a background is the long range of mountains towering aloft.

The ever-changing beauties of the mountains, the innumerable craft plying up and down the river, form a panorama of which the eye never wearies.

In all the surroundings art has seized upon the most available points for enjoying the picturesque and grand, which have been so lavishly bestowed by nature.

The roads on either side of the river, and running parallel, are as fine as park boulevards, shaded most of the way by fine old forest trees, affording the opportunity for very pleasant drives.

A visit to the Government grounds and military school of West Point, one mile and a quarter from the hotel, makes a delightful ride along the bank of the river, and one of which the guests apparently never tire.

Nature and art have combined to make West Point one of the most picturesque and attractive spots on the continent.

The varied drills of the cadets enable one to see all the evolutions of an army, executed with marked precision and skill.

The "hops," which are frequently given at the military academy, form no slight attraction to the young lady guests of the hotel, as they are eagerly sought by the budding soldiers to make up the cotillon.

The drive to Fort Putnam, one mile and a half, is very interesting. This fort, built upon a spur of the mountain back of West Point, some six hundred feet above the river though long since abandoned by troops, retains its parapets and several casemates in good state of preservation. The view taken from its walls is magnificent. A fine road runs all the way to the fort.

The Government has just completed a new observatory, which well repays a visit. It is built on the foundation of old Fort Willis, and is not far from Fort Putnam. A

fine road runs directly to it, and from its top a fine view can be obtained. By continuing along this road one can return to the hotel by way of West Point, making altogether a very pleasant drive.

To one fond of mountain scenery the ride to the summit of "Crow's Nest," distant four or five miles, is most enjoyable. The road is good, and every step of the ascent unfolds new views of the rugged scenery, which before were quite unknown, until at last, from the summit, the eye takes in at a glance the whole range of the Highlands, with all their majestic grandeur, together with miles of the historic Hudson, bearing upon its bosom hundreds of vessels freighted with the commerce of a continent.

The drive to Cornwall, six miles up the river, by a good road over the mountain, is very pleasant ; and if one desires to make an all-day's ride, he can continue on to the city of Newburg, there lunch, returning by same road to the hotel in time for dinner.

A very pretty ride, full of wild mountain

scenery, may be had by going up the "Eagle Valley Road" to "Long Lake," four or five miles ; the road is hilly but very good.

The iron mine, "Forest de Dean," nine miles from the hotel, repays a visit. The working of the mine is in full operation, and the obliging foreman will permit parties to go into the mine and witness the process of getting out ore. The drift is fifteen hundred feet in length, five hundred feet below the surface.

A very lovely drive down the river may be taken of four miles, leading to the sites of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, of revolutionary fame. Very little of the forts remain, but their sites are interesting from the fact that one of the bloodiest conflicts of the war took place when they were captured. By continuing on the road, two miles farther in among the hills, Highland lake is reached, lying at the foot of Bear Hill, between it and the river. This lake is a lovely sheet of water, embosomed among the hills, very attractive for whiling away a few

hours of a summer's day. The drives so far mentioned are on the west side of the river.

One of the first objects that strikes the eye on the east side, in looking from the veranda of the hotel, is a tower-like building, erected apparently upon the summit of one of the mountains of that side.

This house is the summer seat of Mr. Osborn, recently completed in most elaborate style. The stone of which it is constructed was quarried in its immediate vicinity; the rooms are finished off in different kinds of wood; the cabinets, bureaus, bedsteads, etc., to correspond, were all made on the spot. Those made from magnolia and cypress wood from Louisiana, are especially fine. The drive to this place, over the river by ferry from hotel to Garrison's, then up the mountain by fine road, occupies about one hour. The views alone from this place compensate for the journey.

A visit to the Beverley Robinson House, memorable from the treason of Arnold, is of deep interest; the drive to it is very pleasant,

crossing the river to Garrison's, from thence, along the smooth road leading past the handsome grounds of several summer residences; does not occupy more than one hour.

The drive to "Indian Brook Falls," two or three miles from Garrison's, over a fine shady road, is one not to be missed. Leaving the carriage at the bridge which crosses Indian Brook, and entering the ravine and following up the stream a short distance, the Falls are soon reached, the ravine widens out just below the Falls. Turning and looking back down the narrow ravine toward the bridge, there is presented as pretty a picture as can be imagined.

Seated here, where the heat of a summer's sun cannot penetrate, with the walls of the ravine extending high above on either side, with the falls in front and the rippling water running at the feet, one can feel as though he were a thousand miles away from the abode of man.

The drive to Peekskill, ten miles down the river road, is full of beauty, and the camp

of the National Guard in the vicinity of old Fort Independence gives it an additional attraction.

In fact the variety of the landscape, and the character of the country, afford a choice of different types of scenery, which cannot fail to gratify the most varied taste.

The smooth, level boulevards, running along the banks of the river, beneath the shade of fine old forest trees, the branches of which frequently interlock, forming a leafy arch overhead, can be enjoyed by all, especially the timid, while the more venturesome can be fully satisfied with a drive over mountain top and deep ravine.

When nature in summer has arrayed the mountains and valleys of the Highlands in her mantle of green, they become so attractive that one living in their midst may well wish that summer never would end. Yet autumn lends a charm to these scenes, which, to that of summer, is like the bright golden hues of the setting sun to that of the same orb in full career at midday.

Then it is that the gorgeous tinting of the forest-covered mountain beggars all description. The life of contented indolence which this season always invites may be here enjoyed to perfection.

The demand for the autumnal season has induced Mr. Cranston to prolong the closing of the hotel until the Indian summer is past, affording a most charming retreat for the summer tourist before entering upon the routine of winter life.

The ease with which this hotel in the Highlands can be reached makes it a favorite resort for gentlemen who are required every day at their business in New York. Such can go back and forth daily, or, if they prefer, can come up Saturdays, spending Sundays with their families, returning the next morning, running up once or twice during the week, according to circumstances.

Parties wishing to establish their families for the season can make very satisfactory arrangements as to prices, etc., etc.

This hotel is forty-eight miles from New

York, and can be reached any hour of the day by train or boat. The trains on the Hudson River Railroad occupy one hour and fifteen minutes in going from New York to Garrison's. Here the ferry is ready to start for the hotel upon the arrival of every train, whether it comes from the north or south.

The West Shore Railroad will have trains running from Jersey City to this hotel by the time it is opened (June 1st), and will make the distance in one hour, stopping at the new depot at Cranston's Landing, just at the foot of the cliff below the hotel.

Several lines of steamboats run daily up and down the river, touching at Cranston's Landing, affording the traveller an agreeable ride on a summer day, as well as an opportunity of seeing the far-famed beauties of the Hudson.

Guests of the hotel doing business in the city find it convenient to take the *Mary Powell*, which leaves her dock at 3.30 P.M., arriving at Cranston's Landing about 5.45,

in ample time for dinner. The next morning she returns, leaving the landing at 8.20, reaching New York about 10.30.

If one wishes to reach New York earlier, there is an early train which arrives at the city before 9 A.M. Breakfast is always provided for those leaving early.

It does not seem possible for one to inhale the pure air of the Highlands and enjoy the comforts provided by Mr. Cranston, without being made sensible of having received in many respects more or less benefit.

The complete appointments of the house, the high moral tone and standing of the guests, all serve to make a summer spent at Cranston's West Point Hotel one of the most enjoyable ever passed.



